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THE CAPTURE

OF

TICONDEROGA,

IN

1775.

A PAPER READ BEFORE THE

Vermont Historical Society,

AT MONTPELIER,

Tuesday, October 19th, 1869,

By HILAND HALL.

MONTPELIER:
POLANDS' STEAM PRINTING ESTABLISHMENT,
Journal Building, State Street.
1869.

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ADDRESS OF GOV. HALL.

Mr. President of the Vermont Historical Society,

and Ladies and Gentlemen:

Before I commence the paper which I have been requested to read this evening, a word of explanation seems necessary. Within the past dozen years a special enmity toward the early inhabitants and institutions of Vermont has been exhibited by a few historical writers in New York City; perhaps inherited from their land-jobbing ancestors. Their hostile demonstrations have not been made by any attempted production of facts or arguments, but in dark insinuations against the patriotism or integrity of the founders of our State, and by calling them an abundance of hard names. Ethan Allen has come in for a large share of their hostility, though it has generally been without assuming any tangible form. But in December last, Mr. B. F. DeCosta, who I understand is a retired clergyman living in New York city, so far departed from the previous practice as to come forward with an elaborate article in the *Galaxy* Magazine, in which he undertakes to show that John Brown, Esq., of Pittsfield, and the traitor, Arnold, were the real heroes in the capture of Ticonderoga, and that what Ethan Allen did was of very little account.

The magazine article was very thoroughly and effectually answered by Professor George W. Benedict, in the Burlington *Free Press*, and by the Hon. J. Hammond Trumbull, in the Connecticut *Courant*, and in newspaper articles by others in Boston and St.

Albans. The paper which I am about to read was prepared soon after the publication of the *Galaxy* article, under the impression that it might be advisable, at some future time, to publish a refutation of it, in a more permanent form than in the daily or weekly newspaper, but without intending to read it before this Society. It is read now, in consequence of the unexpected failure of the person selected to deliver the annual address on this occasion.

THE CAPTURE OF TICONDEROGA IN 1775.

Who took Ticonderoga? is a question recently asked in the *Galaxy* Magazine, by Mr. B. F. DeCosta, of New York city, which question he at once proceeded to answer by giving an account of the event quite different from that which has been commonly received.

The leading facts relating to the capture have hitherto been regarded to be, that the expedition was secretly planned by some gentlemen in Connecticut, who furnished a few men with funds for expenses and supplies for the undertaking; that these men set off for Bennington with the intention of engaging Col. Ethan Allen in the enterprise, and with the expectation of raising the force for the capture on the New Hampshire Grants; that on their way, at Salisbury and in Berkshire county, their number was increased to some fifty or sixty; that on the New Hampshire Grants they were joined by nearly two hundred Green Mountain Boys collected by Allen and his associates, Allen being elected to the command of the whole; that after the men had been mustered at Castleton for the attack, Benedict Arnold, with a single attendant, arrived there, and claimed the command by virtue of written instructions from the Committee of Safety of Massachusetts, authorizing him "to enlist" four hundred men, and with them seize the fortress; that Arnold, having no authority to command these

men already raised, and to whom he was an entire stranger, his claim was denied, and Allen was confirmed in the supreme command; that Arnold was allowed to join the party as an assistant, and when the fort was surprised, was permitted to enter it by the side of Allen at his left; and that Allen, being thus in command of the expedition, demanded the surrender of the fort from Capt. Delaplace, its commander, "in the name of the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress."

Such is a brief outline of the account of the capture given by Gordon in his contemporaneous history; by Holmes in his Annals; by Sparks in his Lives of Allen and Arnold; by Hildreth in his History of the United States; by Irving in his Life of Washington; and by Bancroft, and numerous other historians.

In contravention of this uniform current of history, the writer in the *Galaxy* Magazine, disregarding the most important features of this account, claims that John Brown, a lawyer of Pittsfield, Massachusetts, "was the person who first suggested the enterprise" by which the fortress was taken; that he had visited Canada by the request of Gen. Joseph Warren and Samuel Adams, "to secure the aid of the people to the cause of independence," and that in the month of March, 1775, he had written to Warren and Adams, "that the fort of Ticonderoga must be seized, as soon as possible, should hostilities be committed by the king's troops;" that Samuel Adams, who was a delegate from Massachusetts to the Continental Congress, while on his way to Philadelphia, was at Hartford *on the twenty-seventh of April*, 1775, when he and "a number of gentlemen met with the governor of Connecticut and resolved on the capture of Ticonderoga," in furtherance of "Brown's recommendation;" that the party sent on the expedition from Connecticut, "at once reported to Brown for the express purpose of advising with him about the whole matter." Therefore, the writer concludes that Col. John Brown is entitled to the credit of originating the plan for the capture,

and especially that Ethan Allen had nothing whatever to do with it. In the actual capture of the fortress, the writer claims that Arnold held a joint and equal command with Allen, and is, in fact, entitled to the largest share of the honor.

Mr. DeCosta, who professes to belong to a "new school of history," commences his views of the capture of Ticonderoga with high claims to historical research and accuracy, as follows:

"*The study of American history*," he says, "*has now entered upon a new era. An intelligent patriotism no longer demands the unquestioned belief of every vainglorious tradition. Historical students have discovered that in order to enforce conviction they must produce authorities.*"

We are not disposed to controvert the rule which the writer thus lays down for historical research. Whether it belongs to an old or "a new era," it is peculiarly obligatory upon one, who like the *Galaxy* writer, propounds a new historical theory for the overthrow of a belief which has prevailed for nearly a century, and has hitherto been unquestioned.

Now for the application of this rule to the article of Mr. DeCosta, that we may ascertain to what extent he "enforces conviction" of its truth "by the production of authorities."

And first, in regard to his assumption that John Brown was the originator of the expedition by which Ticonderoga was taken. The first piece of evidence upon which the writer relies, is a letter written from Montreal by Brown to General Joseph Warren and Samuel Adams, in the month of March, 1775, from which he makes a quotation as follows:

"One thing I must mention, to be kept a profound secret. The fort of Ticonderoga must be seized as soon as possible, should hostilities be committed by the king's troops. The people on the New Hampshire Grants *have engaged to do the business*, and, in my opinion, are the proper persons for the job."

One would naturally suppose from the fact here stated by Brown, "*that the people on the New Hampshire Grants had engaged to do the business;*" that he had been in consultation with the leaders of those people, persons who were accustomed to speak and act in their behalf and to enter into engagements for them. But this natural inference would interfere with the writer's theory that the project was wholly Brown's, by leaving it in doubt whether the capture was first suggested by him or by those with whom he had been in consultation on the New Hampshire Grants. It was, therefore, necessary for him to ignore any such intercourse with the leaders, which he does by asserting that "the *only people* he, [Brown] had anything to do with were a couple of old hunters who ferried him hurriedly down Lake Champlain." To be sure, this places Brown in the unenviable position of making a false representation to his employers, that the people on the Grants had made a certain important engagement with him, when he had not seen them and it was consequently impossible that they should have done any such thing. Hence we are compelled to infer, that in the ethics of the "new era," upon which "the study of American history has entered," a false representation is regarded as a very trifling matter.

But let us inquire a little further into this mission of Mr. Brown into Canada, and his doings on the New Hampshire Grants. Early in the year 1775, an approaching struggle of the colonies with the mother country was clearly foreseen, and measures taken to prepare for it. On the 15th of February a resolution was passed by the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts, which, after reciting that it appeared to be the design of the British ministry to engage the Canadians and Indians in hostile measures against the colonies, directed the committee of correspondence of the town of Boston, "in such way and manner as they should think proper, to open and establish an *intimate correspondence and con-*

nection with the inhabitants of the Province of Quebec, and that they endeavor to put the same immediately into execution." That committee appointed Mr. Brown to repair to Canada for the purpose indicated by the resolution, furnishing him with letters and pamphlets for friends in Montreal. It appears by Mr. Brown's letter from that place to Messrs. Warren and Adams before referred to, which bears date March 29, 1775, that immediately after receiving the letters and papers he went to Albany to open a correspondence with a Dr. Joseph Young, and also to ascertain the state of the lakes, which he says he found "impassable at that time." He accordingly returned to Pittsfield, and about a fortnight afterward, "set out for Canada." That he took the most direct and convenient route through Bennington across the New Hampshire Grants, there can be no manner of doubt. It appears by his letter that on his arrival in Canada, the engagement with him to capture Ticonderoga, before mentioned, had been entered into, and that he had also accomplished one of the most important objects of his mission, indicated in the Massachusetts resolution, by establishing, as his letter states, "*a channel of correspondence through the New Hampshire Grants, which might be depended on*," neither of which could have been done if he had taken any other route. He says in his letter "two men from the New Hampshire Grants accompanied me" to Canada. These companions and guides were furnished him by the committee of the New Hampshire Grants at Bennington, as appears by authentic and undoubted evidence. One of them was no other than Peleg Sunderland, one of the eight persons who had been condemned to death without trial by the infamous New York outlawry act of 1774. In 1787, he petitioned the General Assembly of Vermont, stating that "in the month of March, 1775, he was called upon and requested by the *Grand Committee* at Bennington to go to Canada as a pilot to Major John Brown, who was sent by the Pro-

vincial Congress," etc.; that he was in that service twenty-one days, for which he had never received any compensation. The petition was referred to a committee who reported that "the petitioner did go to Canada *by order of the authority*, to pilot Major Brown as set up in his petition," and recommended that he be paid therefor from the State Treasury, the sum of eight pounds and fourteen shillings, being at the rate of one dollar per day, which payment was accordingly made. (See petition and report on file in the office of the Secretary of State at Montpelier, and Journals of Assembly, March 7, 1787; also Hall's Early History of Vermont, 198, 470. For Brown's letter to Warren and Adams, see Force's Archives, Vol. 2, 4th series, 243.)

There would seem, then, to be no doubt that Mr. Brown did see other people on the New Hampshire Grants besides "the couple of old hunters, who ferried him hurriedly down Lake Champlain;" that he did in fact confer with "the Grand Committee" of those people, and that there is, therefore, no reason to question the truth of Brown's statement, that "the people on the New Hampshire Grants" had engaged to capture Ticonderoga. It consequently follows that Mr. DeCosta's theory, which convicts Brown of misrepresentation and falsehood, falls to the ground.

It is perhaps proper to notice here that Mr. DeCosta, after what he says about the two old hunters, adds the following: "With Allen, who lived far away from the lake, he (Brown) had no communication as is shown by the declarations of Allen himself." We have no direct proof that Brown saw Allen on this occasion, though there is no reason to doubt that he did, for Allen's residence was at Bennington, and he was a member of the Grand Committee with whom Brown conferred. It is difficult to speak in words polite of the assertion of Mr. DeCosta, that "*it is shown by the declarations of Allen himself*," that Brown did not see him. The writer produces no authority for the statement, and can produce none.

It is either a random assertion made without thought or consideration, allowable only in his "new era of American history," or it is something worse. *There is not a word of truth in it.*

Whether the suggestion in regard to the seizure of Ticonderoga was first made by Allen, or by some other of the Green Mountain Boys with whom Brown was in conference, or by Brown himself, does not appear, nor is it material to know. The necessity of the seizure, in case of hostilities with the mother country, was too obvious to escape the attention of any intelligent person residing on the New Hampshire Grants, or indeed anywhere in New England. While the lake, which that fort commanded, had been in the possession of the French, the Northern frontier had been constantly exposed to their incursions, and had been repeatedly ravaged by their Indian allies. That frontier, which had until then been Northern Massachusetts, was now, by the settlements on the New Hampshire Grants, on the very verge of the fortress. There could be no security whatever for the people on those Grants, if the fort was to remain in the possession of an enemy. The suggestion of its capture, the necessity for which could not but have been seen and felt by hundreds, could not add to the fame of either Allen or Brown. The speaking or writing of the propriety or necessity of the seizure of Ticonderoga, and the originating of a plan which should result in its capture, are two very different things, which however, Mr. DeCosta does not seem to comprehend. Under the circumstances which actually existed, we have seen that the former would be a small matter. The latter, on the contrary, would be quite an important one. If the expedition from Connecticut which eventuated in the seizure of the fortress, was started in consequence of Brown's letter to Warren and Adams, and with the design that Brown as the originator of it, should aid in its execution, as is contended by Mr. DeCosta, then Brown is entitled to an honor which has not hitherto been

accorded to him, and which it is not known that he ever claimed.

We will now proceed to inquire into the origin of the expedition, which, it is agreed on all hands, was first put in motion at Hartford. Since the publication in 1860, by the Connecticut Historical Society, under the direction of J. Hammond Trumbull, its distinguished President, of sundry original documents, principally from the public archives of that State, there seems no room for doubt about its origin. The capture was concerted at Hartford on the 27th of April, 1775, between Col. Samuel H. Parsons, Col. Samuel Wyllys and Silas Deane, who associated with them Christopher Leffingwell, Thomas Mumford and Adam Babcock. These six gentlemen on the following day, for the sake of secrecy and dispatch, without any consultation with the Assembly or other persons, obtained from the Colony Treasury on their personal obligations, three hundred pounds for the purposes of the undertaking. This was on Friday, the 28th of April, and on the same day Capt. Noah Phelps and Bernard Romans were dispatched with the money to the northward to obtain men and supplies; and the next day they were followed by Capt. Edward Mott, Jeremiah Halsey, Epaphras Bull, William Nichols and two others, and were overtaken by them on Sunday evening at Salisbury, some forty miles from Hartford. The receipts to the Treasurer for the money bear date the 28th of April, and the evidence in proof of the time of the departure of the expedition is full and unquestionable. (Conn. Hist. Col., Vol. 1, 162–188.)

According to Mr. DeCosta, Samuel Adams, one of the gentlemen to whom Mr. Brown's letter from Montreal had been addressed, was in Hartford *on the 27th of April* on his way to Philadelphia, with John Hancock and others, and on that day the plan for the capture of the fortress was arranged by him and other gentlemen with the governor and council of Connecticut. Now if Samuel Adams was not at Hartford on the 27th of April when the

expedition was planned, Mr. DeCosta's theory and superstructure fall to the ground. That he could not have been there on that day is beyond question. On the 24th of April, John Hancock wrote from Worcester to the Massachusetts committee of safety, among other things, as follows: "Mr. S. Adams and myself just arrived here, find no intelligence from you and no guard. * * * * * * * * * How are we to proceed? Where are our brethren? * * * * * * * * Where is Cushing? Are Mr. Paine and Mr. John Adams to be with us? [They were the other three delegates to the Continental Congress.] * * Pray remember *Mr. Adams* and myself to all friends." (Force's Archives, 4th Series, Vol. 2, 384.) On the 26th, he wrote again: "I set out to-morrow morning." (*Ibid*, 401.) The distance from Worcester to Hartford, seventy or eighty miles, was two good days' travel in those days, and the delegates could not have reached there till the evening of the 28th or the morning of the 29th, after Phelps and Romans were well on their way to Salisbury.

In support of his claim that Mr. Adams was at Hartford on the 27th of April, Mr. DeCosta relies upon two authorities, both of which flatly contradict his position. One of them is the life of Samuel Adams by Mr. Wells, who instead of stating that Mr. Adams was at Hartford on that day, says he left Worcester on the 27th, and was at Hartford on the 29th. (Vol. 2, 207.) The other authority is an anonymous letter found in Force's American Archives, (Vol. 2, 507) from a gentleman in Pittsfield, dated May 4, 1775, which erroneously states that the expedition had been concerted the previous *Saturday* by Samuel Adams and Col. Hancock with the governor of Connecticut and others. But the previous Saturday was the 29th of April, and not the 27th, which, as we have seen, was the next day after the advance party of the expeditionists had left Hartford. It is, therefore, very clear that

Mr. Adams could not have had any hand in planning the expedition, and of consequence that Brown's letter to him and Warren had nothing to do with it. It is proper to state in this connection that Mr. Bancroft in the first edition of his History of the United States followed the Pittsfield letter, in stating that the expedition had been concerted by Adams and Hancock with the governor of Connecticut at Hartford, "*On Saturday, the 29th of April;*" but in his later edition, issued since the publication of the Connecticut Historical Collections, before mentioned, he expunged that statement as unfounded, and ascribed the origin of the adventure to the private gentlemen we have before named. (Bancroft, Vol. 7, editions of 1858, and of 1864, p. 338.) It was reserved for Mr. DeCosta to discover that *Saturday* the 29th of April, was *Thursday* the 27th; and there can be no doubt that he does belong to "a new school of history;" one that in support of a favorite theory, not only wrests authorities from their obvious meaning, but relies upon those to sustain it which prove it to be false.

Mr. DeCosta refers to another authority in relation to "Col. John Brown," with what object it is difficult to conceive, unless it was to convince his readers that it was utterly impossible for him to understand correctly, and properly apply, any peice of historical evidence whatever. He says, "only three days after the decision of the people at Hartford, General Warren wrote to Alexander McDougal of New York, saying that it had been proposed to take Ticonderoga;" and Mr. DeCosta asks, "By whom was this proposition made?" And then in answer says, "the only person of whom we have any knowledge who had urged this upon Warren was Col. John Brown in his letter from Montreal the previous March." This letter of Warren to McDougal bears date the 30th of April, and on the same page of Force's Archives, (Vol. 2, 450) where Mr. DeCosta finds it, and immediately pre-

ceding it, is a letter from Benedict Arnold to Warren of the same date, stating the condition of the fort at Ticonderoga, showing most conclusively that it was Arnold's and not Brown's proposition to which the letter to McDougal referred. How it was possible for the writer of the *Galaxy* article to overlook the connection between these two letters of the same date, thus found together on the same page, is a mystery, which can only be solved by Mr. DeCosta himself.

Mr. DeCosta, seeking to confirm his theory that it was part of the programme of the expedition from Hartford, that Brown was to take a part in it, says, "the party from Connecticut moved at once to Col. John Brown, at Pittsfield, *for the express purpose* of advising with him about the whole matter." Again he says, "the party from Connecticut at once reported to Brown," and thus "acknowledged his agency." Now, there is no foundation whatever for this statement, and if the writer had paid but a moderate attention to the abundant authentic evidence bearing on the point, he certainly could not have hazarded any such assertion; unless, indeed, the habit of misunderstanding and perverting the meaning of authorities, which we have seen he had fallen into, in his "new school of history," had become too inveterate to be overcome.

From the papers published in the Connecticut Historical Collections, before mentioned, consisting of the journal of the expedition kept by Capt. Edward Mott, and a contemporaneous account by Elisha Phelps, and also by the official report made to the Massachusetts Congress by the committee having charge of the expedition, it fully appears that it was no part of the original design of the Connecticut party to call upon Brown at all; that the men from Hartford were to stop at Salisbury, and after being joined there by a few others, were, in the language of Captain Mott, "to keep their business secret and ride through the country un-

armed until they came to the new settlements on the Grants," where they were to raise the men to make the capture. The party pursued that intention until they arrived at Pittsfield, where, stopping to tarry over night, they fell in with Col. James Easton and John Brown, Esq., and learning that the latter had lately been to Canada, concluded to inform them of their project and to take their advice. The result of their conference was, that it was resolved to raise a portion of the force for the expedition in Berkshire county, and both Easton and Brown agreed to take part in it. (See Conn. Collections, 167, 168, 173, 174, 175; Force's Archives, Vol. 2, 557–559, and Jour. Mass. Cong., 696.)

The only authority which Mr. DeCosta cites in support of this part of his theory, is the before mentioned Pittsfield letter, the meaning of which he distorts and falsifies after his usual manner. He quotes it as stating the fact that "the Connecticut volunteers reported to Col. Brown"—whereas the letter states no such thing. It merely says that the Connecticut men at Pittsfield had "been joined by Col. Easton, Capt. Dickinson and *Mr. Brown* with forty soldiers." Here is no intimation that the volunteers, in pursuance of previous instructions, reported to Brown. Brown merely joined them. It might, at least with equal propriety be asserted that they reported to Col. Easton or Capt. Dickinson, their names being mentioned prior to that of Brown's. (Force's Archives, Vol. 2, 507.)

Although Brown had no part in originating the Ticonderoga expedition, his services, after he joined it, were undoubtedly earnest and valuable, and they were duly appreciated and acknowledged by his associates. There is no reason to suppose that he ever, in his lifetime, claimed the peculiar honor which Mr. DeCosta seems determined to thrust upon him. It is evident, however, from Mr. DeCosta's whole article, that he was much less anxious to increase the fame of Brown, than to lessen that of Col. Allen.

After stating what he claims for Brown in originating the expedition, when he comes to his statement that the Connecticut men reported to Brown, he says, "with all these transactions Ethan Allen had nothing whatever to do." Again, he says, "we are justified in declaring that Brown's recommendation was carried to Hartford and acted upon;" and he adds, "certainly Ethan Allen was in no way concerned." And he winds up this branch of his tirade against Allen as follows: "In view of the testimony which has been brought to bear on the subject, *it will be idle any longer to support the claim of Ethan Allen as the originator of the plan to capture Ticonderoga.*"

If, under the inspiration of his "new historical school," it had been allowable for Mr. DeCosta to have paid some little attention to the actual history of the expedition about which he was undertaking to write, he would readily have discovered that there was no necessity whatever for manufacturing John Brown into a new hero of Ticonderoga, for the purpose of supplanting Allen; and for the very plain reason that Allen had never made any pretensions to have done what the writer claims for Brown. Allen never claimed that he was the originator of the Ticonderoga expedition, but always admitted and declared that it was set on foot in Connecticut. It is so stated in his letter from Ticonderoga to the Albany Committee, of May 11, and also in one from Crown Point, of June 2, 1775, to the New York Congress. (Force's Archives, Vol. 2, 606, 891. In his narrative of his captivity, he speaks of it as follows: "The bloody attempt at Lexington to enslave America, thoroughly electrified my mind, and fully determined me to take part with my country; and while I was wishing for an opportunity to signalize myself in its behalf, directions were privately sent me from the then Colony (now State) of Connecticut, to raise the Green Mountain Boys, and, if possible, with them to surprise the fortress, Ticonderoga. This enterprise I cheerfully

undertook," etc. So it turns out that Mr. DeCosta, in his eagerness to tarnish the fair fame of Col. Allen, has thus far been combatting a phantom of his own creation, and has thus expended a vast amount of labor in falsifying history to no purpose whatever. Leaving then, to the writer of this philippic against Allen, all the glory he has acquired by inventing and discussing this false issue, we will proceed to inquire into the real facts of the enterprise; and in this inquiry we will not overlook any additional light which Mr. DeCosta has attempted to throw upon it.

We have already seen from the statements of Captains Mott and Phelps, two of the principal persons who were sent from Hartford to superintend the expedition, that it was their original intention, and according to their instructions, to raise the men to carry it into execution on the New Hampshire Grants. Such being their design, it was indispensable to secure the aid of Col. Ethan Allen, the then well known active and fearless leader of those people, who under the name of Green Mountain Boys, had for years successfully defended their farms against the efforts of the land-jobbing government of New York to dispossess them. Their bravery and local position, pointed them out to the Connecticut men, as well as to John Brown, as "the most proper persons for the job."

From Hartford, therefore, the conductors of the enterprise, instead of reporting "at once to Col. Brown," as Mr. DeCosta has it, went straight to Salisbury, the old home of Ethan Allen, where his brothers Heman and Levi were living, who both joined the party. At Pittsfield, we have seen that the purpose of the leaders was so far changed, that it was determined to raise a portion of the necessary force in Berkshire county, and Col. Easton and others set about doing it. An account of the expedition published in the Hartford *Courant*, of May 22, 1775, twelve days after the capture, after stating that the Connecticut party had engaged

Easton and Brown in the enterprise, says, "they likewise *immediately* [doubtless that night] dispatched an express to the intrepid Col. Ethan Allen, of Bennington, desiring him to be ready to join them with a party of his valiant Green Mountain Boys." The Pittsfield letter, before referred to, after stating that the men of the expedition had left that place on Tuesday, adds, "a post having previously taken his departure to inform Col. Ethan Allen of the design, and desiring him to hold his Green Mountain Boys in readiness." But here we encounter an authority, produced by Mr. DeCosta, which he says has "recently been brought to public light from the Archives of Connecticut," and which he introduces with a great flourish, as if it were perfectly annihilating to the fame of Allen. It is the account of Bernard Romans with the Colony of Connecticut for monies expended in the capture of Ticonderoga. One item of the account is in the following words: "*Paid Heman Allen going express after Ethan Allen*, 120 *miles*, £2.16*s*." "*Thus*," adds Mr. DeCosta, "*Allen himself had to be drummed up*." Without stopping to take exception to the peculiar language of this assertion, we are free to admit that the fact implied in it, is undoubtedly true. It was in the original programme of the expedition at Hartford, that Allen should be found—notified—hunted up,—or if you please, "drummed up," and induced to join it; for if that was not done, the enterprise would be likely to fail. The fact that it was deemed essential to the success of the undertaking that Allen should be "drummed up"—which is confirmed, beyond question, by this account of Romans—is highly creditable to the colonel; and for its discovery, if it had been as hidden as Mr. DeCosta seems to suppose, we should be inclined to thank him quite heartily. The production of this authority in the *Galaxy* article, is another example of the proneness of "the new school of history" to rely upon evidence that disproves the positions it aims to establish. Whether Heman Allen was paid for his actual travel from his house in Salisbury,

or for his travel each way, or only one way, or precisely where he found his brother, is not stated. His mission, however, was successful; for we learn from Captain Elisha Phelps that when the men from Pittsfield reached Bennington they "met Colonel Allen, who was much pleased with the intended expedition." (Conn. His. Col., 175.) He having been thus "drummed up," and his efficient services secured, the expedition proceeded to its successful issue.

The great object of the writer of the *Galaxy* article is to produce some substitute for Ethan Allen as the hero of Ticonderoga; and having now done all in his power for Col. Brown, he expends his subsequent efforts in favor of Benedict Arnold, who he claims was in joint and equal command with Allen, and is indeed entitled to the largest share of the honor of the capture.

It should here be stated that on the 3d of May, the day on which the party from Connecticut reached Bennington, on their way to Ticonderoga, Benedict Arnold, who was at Cambridge, near Boston, was appointed by the Massachusetts Committee of Safety, "Colonel and commander-in-chief over a body of men not exceeding four hundred," whom he was directed *to enlist, and with them to proceed and reduce the fort at Ticonderoga.* By the terms of his orders he was *to enlist the men* with whom he was to seize the fortress, and he was not authorized to command any other men. (See copy of his orders, Force's Archives, vol. 2, 485.) He proceeded to the western part of Massachusetts, where he had scarcely begun his attempt to raise men, when he learned that a party from Connecticut was in advance of him in the enterprise. Stopping only to engage a few officers to enlist troops and follow him, he pushed on in pursuit with a single attendant, and reached Castleton, after the Green Mountain Boys had been rallied by Allen and his associates, and the whole force had been mustered at that place for the attack.

We have an official account of the expedition from its com-

mencement at Hartford, till its termination, addressed by Edward Mott, as chairman of the committee of war of the expedition, to the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts, dated the 11th day of May, 1775, the next day after the capture, which is undoubtedly entitled to full credit. The following is the language of so much of it as relates to the part taken by Benedict Arnold :

"On Sunday evening, the 7th of this instant, May, we arrived at Castleton, where, on the next day, was held a council of war by a committee chosen for that purpose, of which committee I had the honor to be chairman. After debating and consulting on different methods of procedure in order to accomplish our designs, it was concluded and voted that we would proceed in the following manner, viz.: That a party of thirty men, under the command of Capt. Herrick, should, on the next day in the afternoon, proceed to Skenesborough and take into custody Major Skene and his party, and take possession of all the boats that they should find there, and in the night proceed up the lake to Shoreham [where they were to meet] with the remainder of our men, which were about one hundred and forty, who were under the command of Col. Ethan Allen, and Col. James Easton as his second, and Captain Warner, the third in command. As these three men were the persons who raised the men, they were chosen to the command, and to rank according to the number of men that each one raised. We also sent off Capt. Douglass, of Jericho, [Hancock,] to proceed directly to Panton, and there consult his brother-in-law, who lived there, and send down some boats to Shoreham, if possible, to help our people over to the fort. All this it was concluded should be done or attempted, and was voted universally.

"After this affair was all settled, and the men pitched on to go in each party, all were preparing for their march, being then within about nine miles of Skenesborough, and about twenty-five miles, on the way we went, from Ticonderoga, Colonel Arnold arrived to us from you with his orders. We were extremely rejoiced to see

that you fully agreed with us as to the expediency and importance of taking possession of the garrisons. But we were shockingly surprised when Col. Arnold presumed to contend for the command of those forces that we had raised, whom we had assured should go under the command of their own officers, and be paid and maintained by the colony of Connecticut. But Mr. Arnold, after we had generously told him our whole plan, strenuously contended and insisted that he had a right to command them and all their officers; which bred such a mutiny amongst the soldiers as almost frustrated our whole design. Our men were for clubbing their firelocks and marching home, but were prevented by Col. Allen and Col. Easton, who told them that he should not have the command of them, and if he had, their pay would be the same as though they were under their command; but they would damn the pay, and say they would not be commanded by any others but those they engaged with.

"After the garrison was surrendered," continues the official account, "Mr. Arnold again assumed the command, although he had not one man there, and demanded it of Col. Allen, on which we gave Col. Allen his orders in writing, as follows, viz.:

"'To Col. Ethan Allen,

"'Sir:— Whereas, agreeably to the power and authority to us given by the Colony of Connecticut, we have appointed you to take the command of a party of men, and reduce and take possession of the garrison at Ticonderoga and the dependencies thereto belonging; and as you are now in actual possession of the same, your are hereby required to keep the command and possession of the same, for the use of the American colonies, until you have further orders from the colony of Connecticut, or the Continental Congress.

"'Signed per order of the Committee of War.

"'EDWARD MOTT, *Chairman of said Committee.*'"

Thus far in the words of the official document. The report then gives an account of the surprise of the fort, and speaks favorably

of the services of Col. Easton, and recommends "John Brown, Esq., of Pittsfield, as an able counsellor, full of spirit and resolution, as well as great good conduct."

Accompanying this report of the committee of war to the Massachusetts Congress, was a certificate, signed by James Easton, Epaphras Bull, Edward Mott and Noah Phelps as "committee of war for the expedition against Ticonderoga and Crown Point," confirming the foregoing statement of Mott as their chairman. Capt. Mott, also, in his journal of the expedition, gives a similar account of Arnold's claim to the command, and of the decisive denial of his claim, both before and after the surrender of the fort. (Journal Mass. Cong., 696–699; Force's Archives, Vol. 2, 556–560.)

Gordon, in his history speaks as follows of the application of Arnold for the command:

"A council of war was called; his powers were examined; and at length it was agreed, that he should be admitted to join and act with them, that so the public might be benefited. It was settled, however, that Col. Allen should have the supreme command, and Col. Arnold was to be his assistant; with which the latter appeared satisfied, as he had no right by his commission either to command or interfere with the others." (Vol. 2, 11.)

In the face of all this full and trustworthy contemporary evidence, Mr. DeCosta comes forward, at this late day, and says: "It is true that the command of the volunteers raised was at first given to Allen, but when Benedict Arnold arrived at Castleton, with authority from the Massachusetts committee, *the command was divided, and it was definitely arranged that Arnold and Allen should exercise an equal authority, which is a point that has not been generally understood.*" Certainly, Mr. DeCosta is right in saying that "point has not been generally understood," and he might have said with equal force that it never would be. The statement itself is altogether improbable. A divided command

would be a novel experiment in military operations, quite too rash and dangerous, one would think, to be attempted. Indeed, the idea that a body of intelligent persons about to make a perilous attack upon a fortified post, should have deliberately consented and "definitely arranged" that two men should exercise an equal authority over them, the one be allowed to direct one thing, and the other with equal right to forbid it and direct another, seems too absurd to be credited of sane men. Certainly, no one can be expected to believe it but upon the production of the fullest proof from sources altogether beyond suspicion. There is no such proof.

The only authorities to sustain this story of a divided command are the statements of Arnold himself, and an anonymous and suspicious newspaper article. These statements, as we shall see, are inconsistent with each other, and being contradicted by all other evidence, are not entitled to any credit whatever.

Arnold had been ambitious of the honor of capturing the fortress, and was sorely disappointed in finding that another expedition was in advance of him. Possessed of unbounded assurance, he made claims of authority under his commission, which it in no sense warranted, and to which he could have no equitable pretensions, in the hope that his arrogant assumptions would induce the men already embodied to accept him as their commander. Foiled in this, the next day after the capture he wrote a long letter to the Massachusetts Committee of Safety, from whom he had received his commission, railing bitterly against Allen and his associates in the expedition, and claiming great merit for himself, with the hope, no doubt, of inducing the committee to favor his pretensions, and place him in the command of the post. Envious of the honor acquired by Allen, and anxious to share at least a portion of it, he falsely wrote to the committee that "on and before taking possession" of the fort he "had agreed with Col. Allen to issue future orders jointly," but that "Allen, finding he had the ascendency over his people," had violated the agreement, and refused

to allow him any command. He claimed that he "was the first person who entered and took possession of the fort," and says he "shall keep it at every hazard;" and he states that the men at the fort "are in the greatest confusion and anarchy, destroying and plundering private property, and committing every enormity," &c., &c. (Force's Archives, Vol. 2, 557.)

Arnold also in a letter to the Continental Congress, of the 29th of May, speaks of his having had a joint command in the capture, not, as in his above mentioned letter, by the agreement of Col. Allen, but by that of the Connecticut committee. After stating his arrival in the neighborhood of Ticonderoga, with his instructions from the Massachusetts committee, he says, "I met one Colonel Allen, with about one hundred men, raised at the instance of *some gentlemen from Connecticut, who agreed we should have a joint command.*" (*Ibid.* 734.) The newspaper article before alluded to, is a communication to *Holt's New York Journal*, signed "Veritas," and dated at Ticonderoga, June 25, 1775. Its professed object was to correct an erroneous account of the capture of the fort, which had been published in the *Oracle of Liberty* at Worcester, and which ascribed an undue share of the honor to Col. Easton. (*Ibid.* 1085.) This gives still another version of the pretended agreement for a joint command. The words of the article are, "When Col. Arnold made known his commission, etc., *it was voted by the officers present* that he should take a joint command with Col. Allen, (Col. Easton not presuming to take any command.)" We thus see that the alleged agreement was at first only with Allen, then, a few weeks later, it was with the gentlemen from Connecticut, and that it finally became amplified into a formal vote of all the officers who were present. The glaring discrepancy between these several accounts would alone be sufficient to cast grave distrust on the whole story, if not to stamp it with absolute falsehood. But what credit can be given to the story when it is found to be contradicted by every other known ac-

count of the capture, and especially, as we have already seen, by that of the committee of war, having the general charge of the expedition, who, if any such agreement had been made with any one, must have known all about it. This committee was composed of intelligent and respectable men, whose veracity was never questioned; and their testimony is of too high a character to be impeached or impaired by any statements of the traitor Arnold, or of an anonymous newspaper writer.

The writer of the "Veritas" article, in addition to his statement about the joint command, says Arnold "was the first person who entered the fort, and Allen about five yards behind him." But this statement is contradicted by Allen in his letter to the Albany Committee, written the next day after the capture, by Gordon in his history, and by other accounts. Allen says, "Col. Arnold entered the fortress with me side by side." (*Ibid.* 606.) Gordon says, "they advanced along-side of each other, Colonel Allen on the right hand of Col. Arnold, and entered the port leading to the fort in the gray of the morning." (Vol. 2, p. 13.) "Veritas" also claims that Arnold is entitled to special merit for hurrying the men across the lake, and hastening the attack, without waiting for the whole force to be brought over; which claim is unsupported by any other evidence, and should be taken to be of the same character with the writer's other statements that have been above disproved.

Treating this article signed "Veritas" as an additional authority to that of Arnold, it can have but small tendency to weaken the effect of the evidence already adduced against it. But it is not entitled to the distinction of a separate and independent account. It is dated, as before stated, the 25th of June, 1775, at Ticonderoga, where Arnold then was, and it was undoubtedly prepared under his supervision and dictation, if not actually penned by him. It purports to have been written "to do justice to modest merit" — *the modest merit of Benedict Arnold!* — a man whose arro-

gance and effrontery were so uniformly offensive as to make his whole life a continued quarrel for power and precedence. It is difficult to conceive that any one but Arnold himself could have had the shamelessness to talk of his *modesty*, or speak of his "*modest merit!*" This alone strongly indicates that he was its author. And the detailed account which the article gives of the numerous alleged sayings and acts of Arnold at different times and places, could only have come from Arnold himself.

It thus appears that the story of Arnold's joint command, of his special services in the capture of the fortress, and of the misconduct of Allen's men after his taking possession, rest upon the authority of Arnold alone—the party who claims the benefit of his statements to enhance his own merit and disparage that of others. And what is the reputation for truth and veracity of this witness who thus testifies against all others, and in his own behalf? *Bad*, beyond question. From his youth up, though admitted to be brave even to rashness, he was always equally well noted for want of principle. Examples of his early falsehood, peculation and fraud might be given, but it is unnecessary. His want of integrity was known long before his patriotism was called in question. He was always as thorough a liar, as he was ever a traitor.

That in his account of the transactions at Ticonderoga, Arnold did not, any more than on other occasions, hesitate at telling a direct falsehood to enhance his own fame or injure that of others, is most certain. There is one instance, at least, about which there can be no controversy. We have already seen that on the 8th of May, before Arnold arrived at Castleton, the whole plan for future proceedings had been agreed upon in council, and the men assigned their respective parts. A party of thirty men, under the command of Captain Herrick, was to go to Skenesborough the next day in the afternoon, and take into custody Major Skene, and cap-

ture his boats. The party did go, and was entirely successful. Major Skene, together with Captain Delaplace and two subalterns, was sent off to Hartford on the 12th of May, in charge of Messrs. Hicock, Halsey and Nichols, with a letter from Col. Allen to Gov. Trumbull, of that date. In his letter Col. Allen says, "I make you a present of a major, a captain and two lieutenants in the regular establishment of George the Third. * * A party of men, under command of Captain Herrick, has took possession of Skenesborough, imprisoned Major Skene, and seized a schooner of his." In Major Skene's petition to the Assembly of Connecticut, he says he was seized by persons claiming to act under the authority of that colony, and that his seizure took place the 9th of May, which was the day before the capture of the fortress. (Conn. Rev. Papers, Vol. 1, Doc. 402, and Conn. Hist. Col. 178–180.) On the 11th of May, two days afterwards, some men who had been enlisted in Western Massachusetts, under Arnold's orders, reached Skenesborough on their way to Ticonderoga, and finding the already captured schooner there, took passage in her, and brought her to the fort, where she arrived on the 13th. (Force's Archives, Vol. 2, 686.) That these were the first of Arnold's men that joined him, is shown by his own letters of the 11th and 19th of May. (*Ibid.* 557, 645.) And yet, he had the hardihood and the meanness to seize upon this incident of the arrival of his men in the schooner, to endeavor to exalt himself with his distant employers, by falsely representing to them that the original capture of Skene and his effects, had been made by them in pursuance of his previous orders. In a letter to the Massachusetts Committee of Safety, dated "Ticonderoga, May 14, 1775," he says, I, [that is Benedict Arnold,] "*I ordered a party to Skenesborough to take Major Skene, who have made him prisoner, and seized a small schooner, which is just arrived here.*" (*Ibid.* 584.) It would seem that this example of Arnold's plain, downright lying, in so important a

matter, ought to be sufficient to satisfy even a disciple of "the new school of history," that any statement of his about his part in the capture of Ticonderoga, or of the misconduct of others there, which is unsupported by other evidence, is not entitled to credit, or even to serious attention.

Coming as Arnold did, with authority from the Massachusetts Committee of Safety, to raise men for the seizure of the fort, which Allen and his associates were about to attack, they were disposed, though utterly denying his right to interfere in any way with their proceedings, to treat him with courtesy and respect. Hence he was allowed to take his place by the side of Allen, and to enter the fort with him at his left hand, but without any command whatever.

Arnold's claim to a joint command, and to have captured the fortress, and his threat "to keep it at every hazard," met with no countenance from the Massachusetts authorities. On the contrary, the congress of that colony, on the 17th of May, by resolution, stated the capture to have been made "by the intrepid valor of a number of men under the command of Col. Allen, Col. Easton and others," and it approved of the proceedings of the committee of the expedition in sustaining Allen in the command of the post. On the 22d of May the congress wrote Arnold, in answer to his before mentioned letter of the 11th, that as the expedition had been begun in Connecticut, they had requested that colony to take the care and direction of the whole matter, and they enclosed Arnold a copy of the letter of request which they had addressed to the Connecticut Assembly. (Jour. of Provincial Congress, 235, 250, and Force's Archives, Vol. 2, 808, 676.)

Early in June, a regiment one thousand strong, from Connecticut, under the command of Col. Benjamin Hinman, arrived at Ticonderoga, to whom Col. Allen at once gave up the command. But Arnold by this time had been joined by some recruits from

Western Massachusetts, and had enlisted some of the original captors of the posts, whose terms of service had expired,— to the number in the whole of some one or two hundred. Notwithstanding the foregoing notice to him, that the conquered posts were to be under the charge of Connecticut, he disputed the authority of Col. Hinman, and insisted that the command belonged to him. On being informed of this conduct, the Massachusetts congress appointed a committee of three of their number to visit Ticonderoga and Crown Point, with instructions to inquire into the condition of affairs, and to give such orders to Arnold as they should deem proper. The committee found him claiming, as they say, "all the posts and fortresses at the south ends of Lake Champlain and Lake George, although Col. Hinman was at Ticonderoga, with near a thousand men at the several posts." The committee gave Arnold a copy of their instructions, and informed him it was expected he would give up the command to Col. Hinman, and be under him as an officer there, but he declined it, *and declared "he would not be second to any man."* Upon this, the committee directed him to turn over the men he had enlisted, which "he said was between two and three hundred," to Col. Hinman; but instead of complying, he disbanded his men, and resigned his commission. He then vented his indignation against the authority that had commissioned him, by fomenting a dangerous mutiny among his disbanded men. His insubordinate and arrogant conduct on this occasion is a fair example of the "*modest merit*" so conspicuously claimed for him in the lying article signed "Veritas," before mentioned; which article very appropriately bears date at Ticonderoga the day after his resignation and mutiny. (See the reports of the committee in the Journal of the Mass. Congress, 717–724, and Force's Archives, Vol. 2, 1407, 1539–40, 1592, 1596, 1598.)

No mention is made of the claim of Arnold to a joint command in the capture of Ticonderoga in any contemporaneous account,

except by Arnold himself, as before stated; and whoever would impugn the current histories of the event, must rely upon his statements alone, and discard the testimony of all others. All other such accounts concur in treating Col. Allen as the sole commander of the expedition, and of the assaulting party. Allen made such claim himself, in letters written the next day to the Albany committee and to the Massachusetts Congress, and in all his correspondence, as well as in his narrative of his captivity before cited, and his claim was uniformly admitted. (Force's Archives, Vol. 2, 606 and 556.)

The sending of the officers captured at Ticonderoga and Skenesborough to Hartford, with a letter from Col. Allen, has already been mentioned. The residue of the prisoners were sent under the escort of Epaphras Bull, one of the Committee of War before mentioned. The former party arrived at Hartford on the 18th of May, and the latter on the 20th. (Conn. Coll., 178, 179.) The next issue of the Hartford *Courant*, of the 22d of May, contains what purports to be an "authentic account of the fortresses of Ticonderoga and Crown Point," which states explicity that, "*Col. Allen commanding the soldiery*, on Wednesday morning they surprised and took possession of the fortress." This account, brought direct from Ticonderoga by the persons having charge of the prisoners, and who belonged to the original party sent from Hartford with the expedition, is entitled to the character and credit of an official account.

But there was another witness of the capture, who certainly ought to have known who took Ticonderoga, and that is Capt. Delaplace, its British Commander, who surrendered it to the assaulting force; and it seems proper to call him to the stand. On the 24th of May, the week after he was brought to Hartford, he addressed to the General Assembly of Connecticut a memorial, "in behalf of himself and the officers and soldiers under his com-

mand," asking to be released from their imprisonment. This memorial is printed in full in "Hinman's Historical Collections of the part sustained by Connecticut in the revolution," published in 1842, page 544. It reads as follows:

"Your memorialists would represent that on the morning of the tenth of May, the garrison of the fortress of Ticonderoga, in the Province of New York, was surprised by a party of armed men, *under the command of one Ethan Allen*, consisting of about one hundred and fifty, who had taken such measures as effectually to surprise the same, that very little resistance could be made, and to whom your memorialists were obliged to surrender as prisoners; and overpowered by a superior force were disarmed, and *by said Allen* ordered immediately to be sent to Hartford."

It would seem that this solemn asseveration of the British commander, in confirmation of the mass of other evidence already produced, ought to be accepted by Mr. DeCosta as a sufficient answer to the question with which he commences his article of "*Who took Ticonderoga?*" and that even he should now be satisfied that it was taken "*by one Ethan Allen*," and that the pretensions of the traitor Arnold to a share in the command were altogether unfounded.

Mr. DeCosta has one remaining difficulty about the taking of Ticonderoga, which it is perhaps worth while to notice. He has great doubts whether Allen did really demand the surrender of the fortress "in the name of the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress," as all history and tradition have hitherto declared. The language of the demand is so perfectly characteristic of Allen as scarcely to need proof, of which however there is no lack. The principal trouble with Mr. DeCosta on this point is, that the Continental Congress did not assemble until the very morning of the capture, and in fact, not until some hours after the surrender. If Mr. DeCosta had paid some slight attention to the history of the period, about which he was seeking to enlighten the public, he

might have ascertained that a general congress of the several colonies had assembled the previous Autumn, and had recommended the meeting of another at Philadelphia, on the 10th of the then following May; that delegates had been appointed to it in all the colonies—in New York after great agitation and discussion; that it was familiarly spoken of as the Continental Congress; that its authority was everywhere acknowledged by the Whigs, and that the day of its assembling was well known in every household in the country. With the fact in Allen's mind that it was the day of the gathering of the Congress, nothing could be more natural than that he should proclaim its authority to the astonished officer of the King, whose tyranical measures it was the design of the Congress to resist. The committee of war, who were in charge of the expedition against the fortress, as well as Allen, bore in remembrance the name and authority of that Congress. In the commission of Mott, as chairman of the committee, to Allen, to keep the command of the fort, which has been before recited, and bears date the 10th day of May, (the very day of its surrender,) Allen is directed to hold the same until he "has further orders from the Colony of Connecticut or *the Continental Congress*." There is, therefore, no occasion for Mr. DeCosta's having any further trouble on that point.

We have now gone through with an examination of all the arguments and authorities brought forward by the writer of the *Galaxy* article, and find that this apostle of "the new school of history" has utterly failed to weaken or impair the long established historical account, which with high pretensions and parade, he promised to overthrow and annihilate. Notwithstanding his extraordinary efforts, things continue as they were. Ethan Allen remains the undisturbed and undoubted hero of Ticonderoga. To him, and the fearless band of patriots under his command, belongs the honor of the capture, and of thus compelling the first surrender of the British flag to the coming American Republic.

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